

Madame Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County, on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the organization. Since it was established in 1985, this group has been dedicated to serving and promoting parks and green spaces in St. Paul, Minnesota and surrounding communities.

Executive Director Peggy Lynch has been there every step of the way, first leading a group of citizens to found the organization to keep a massive high-rise development out of Hidden Falls/Crosby Regional Park in order to preserve green space for everyone in our community. The Friends of the Parks and trails has since developed into a broad, membership supported nonprofit group.

The Friends of the Parks has proven their commitment to St. Paul and Ramsey County parks by promoting open space preservation, protection, improvement, and development of new parks. And as a vital member of the community The Friends of the Parks have successfully laid the foundation for lasting change by working with St. Paul and Ramsey County to require no "net loss" of parkland in any deals the city or county makes, and also helped to create city and county park commissions.

Parks are essential to Minnesotans. They not only provide recreational opportunities and a connection to the natural world, they also provide employment, economic development and increase property values. For 25 years, the Friends of the Parks and Trails have been serving my community, ensuring that all Minnesotans have the opportunity to benefit from the positive resources provided by parks. This deserves our thanks, support and commendation.

Madam Speaker, please join me in rising to honor the 25th Anniversary of The Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County, Peggy Lynch, and all its members and volunteers for their hard work and constant dedication to ensuring parks and green space are available for all to enjoy.